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152

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A  
R H A P S O D Y  
U P O N T H E  
M A R V E L L O U S :

Arising from the First ODES of

H O R A C E and P I N D A R.

Being a Scrutiny into A N C I E N T Poetical Fame,  
Demanded by M O D E R N Common Sense.

---

By C O L L E T C I B B E R, Esq; P. L.

---

*Fame, then, was cheap, and the first Comer sped;  
Which they have since preserv'd by being dead.* DRYDEN.

———— liberius si  
*Dixero quid, si fortè jocosiùs, hoc mihi juris  
Cum veniâ dabis*———— Hor. Sat. 4. L. 1.

---

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A

# R H A P S O D Y

UPON THE

## M A R V E L L O U S.

---

C A N T O I.

---

**F**AME, by your leave! I know your Worth,  
When Truth or Merit send you forth;  
But when your Tube uncall'd you blow,  
As wanton *Cupid* twangs his Bow,  
I neither Sounds or Shafts regard,  
But as they give to Worth Reward.  
Thus let the Old, or Modern Song,  
Be prais'd or blam'd, as weak or strong.

A 2

*Philip!*

*Philip!* whose splendid Race--- but can  
The lofty Lineage raise the Man?  
Small Praise the Gifts of Chance afford,  
Ungrac'd by Virtues, what's the Lord?  
Yet had thy Race known less Degree,  
Fame had to Them flown back from Thee!  
Thou then, sweet Master of the Lay,  
Whose social Wit makes Wisdom gay;  
Whose Verse and Eloquence confest,  
Adorn the Star that beams thy Breast,  
Lift' to a wanton, wild Desire,  
That longs to strike th' *Horatian* Eyre,  
And set the whole *Parnassian* Hill on fire!  
What, tho' th' Attempt seems madly rash,  
I love the Lightning's random Flash!  
Like *Horace*, take a Pride to show  
*Indictum ore alio*;  
Nay, treat of Truths none yet have dar'd to know:  
And, be whatever may my Doom,  
Still, *Dulce est periculum!*

Danger

Danger delights the Bard intrepid,  
 Who feels, within him, Raptures rapid,  
 \* Tumbling, like Torrents, from the Mountain!  
 (Old Type of *Heliconian* Fountain.)  
 For never fure did murmuring Measure,  
 Like Verse *inundating* give Pleasure;  
 Tho' *smooth*, and *deep*, may flow with Sense,  
 Rage! Rage! it seems gives Excellence!  
 When fierce, impetuous Surges rise,  
 'Till Spray of Thought commands the Skies!  
 Then thence! are Ancient Strains commended,  
 When scarce their Meaning's comprehended!  
 Tho' to the Learned clearly known,  
 As in the Grounds of Coffee thrown,  
 Prefaging Dames strange Shapes have shewn!  
 So Lanthorns, that conceal their Light,  
 May be within extremely bright;  
 But 'till that Light is clearly seen,  
 They might as well be dark *within*:

\* *Monte decurrens velut amnis &c.*

Hor. Od. II. L. IV.

And if they were not dark *without*,  
What are your puzzling Notes about?  
Why swarm such Numbers round the Text,  
Were not the Sense sometimes perplext?  
All Sense that Explanation wants,  
In *that*, some grand Omission grants!  
When left to grope, we well may doubt  
The Candle in the Lanthorn's out.  
Whate'er high Flights would raise his Metre,  
The Poets Praise must spring from Nature:  
Soaring beyond her, what's the Muse?  
A poor, blind singing Bird, let loose!  
Take heed! Ancients had Gods t'inspire 'em!  
Indeed? low bowing let's admire 'em:  
Yet, while the Bard his God created,  
The Inspiration seems abated.

If then from Nature they outwrite us,  
Let 'em come forth and fairly fight us!

Let

Let them behind them throw the Shield  
 Of rusty Age, then win the Field!  
 Then shall we see 'twixt *Homer's* Gods,  
 And *Milton's* Paradise, what Odds!  
 What Pleasures *Virgil's* Plains instill,  
 Beyond the Views from *Cooper's Hill*?  
 Or how far *Pindar* sweeps the Bays  
 From *Dryden's* bright *Cecilian* Lays?  
 If sweetly smiling *Lalage*,  
 With *Sacharissa's* Charms may vie?  
 Or, if to Satire we appeal,  
 Have *Horace*, *Perfius*, *Juvenal*,  
 More Sting than *Absalom*, *Achitophel*?  
 Nay even our *Pope*, who tho' from *Horace*,  
 He plainly Plans of Satire borrows,  
 In new-mill'd Coin the Loan repays,  
 And mends the Weight of *Roman* Lays;  
 In stronger Strokes, and Tints of Nature,  
 His Fools and Knaves enrich the Satire,  
 And sound his Sense in more harmonious Metre.

(This

(This Praise must Conscience on him fix,  
Tho' oft' the Loon the *Laureat licks!*)

But now, behold our glowing Sun!  
At whose Approach these Stars are gone:  
See *Shakespeare's* full meridian Light  
Bid ancient Claims to Fame --- good Night;  
Sweet Nature's Muse! hadst thou broke forth,  
Supported by an elder Birth,  
As *Rome*, nor *Athens* e'er could follow  
Thy high-wrote *Hamlet*, or *Othello*,  
Can learned Candour doubt such Lays  
Had born from either Brows the Bays?

But while, rever'd, the Ancient Spirit,  
Wraps in Mythology its Merit,  
What Wonders can we hope from Metre,  
So often void of Truth or Nature?  
Mean is the Meal, that's more design'd  
To fill the Ear, than feed the Mind:

Shall



Shall we then idolize a Bard  
For Sounds to Truth and Use preferr'd!  
Where These are wanting, what's the Lyre?  
An Opera Air, that lulls Desire!  
Whilst Beaux and Belles, soft Souls, expire.

}

Since Modern Fame, then, stands for nothing,  
Or takes two thousand Years for Growth in,  
High time it seems, for Us, who want it,  
To seize the Season Now! to plant it:  
For, if this Year we've Wit, or Sense,  
Why mayn't Men think so thousands hence?

Raise then, my Muse, the lofty Wing,  
And boldly perch'd by *Horace*, sing!  
Nor fear, with *Pindar*'s sounding Song,  
To take thy tow'ring Flight along.  
From both these ancient Lyrists choose  
The leading Strains of either Muse;

Take the best Lights they can be seen in,  
Then mark, how marvellous their Meaning!

When raptur'd *Horace* strikes the Lyre,  
Such is his vaunting Soul's Desire,  
So fierce his Fame's electrick Fire,  
That He, if roll'd a Lyrist, swears  
His Head sublime shall strike the Stars. \*  
Gods! how he mounts! Such Flights as these,  
Might drown the Sun, or fire the Seas:  
Thus, when Ideas swell, and swell,  
Out flies the vast Impossible!  
How easily, when Thought's laid by,  
May light-wing'd Words command the Sky?  
So Jockeys, when they sink their Weight,  
May bear the Field, and lose the Plate.  
But high-soul'd *Horace* mocks the Ways  
Mankind pursue for meaner Praise;

\* *Quod si me lyricis vatibus inferes,  
Sublimi feriam sidera vertice.*

Hor. Od. 1. L. 1.

Laughs

Laughs when of old their Games *Olympick*,  
 (Of which we more from *Pindar's* Hymn pick,)  
 Drew gorgeous Kings to Plains of *Pisa*,  
 (Such Sights as never You nor I saw:)  
 Who there, in Curricles ran Races,  
 Not close hultcht up, like modern Chaifes;  
 But Carrs superb, like Winds that flew,  
 In dust collected, hid from View!  
 Round rolls the Course, in Clouds along,  
 Now Shouts and Clangors charm the Throng!  
 Strong straining Steeds bang! bang! the Ground,  
 Till with the Wreath the Victor's crown'd:  
 Thence, from the Instant he the Prize  
 Receives, his Glory treads the Skies:  
 In lofty Lays, or sacred Ode,  
 The mounting Hero ranks a God!

Yet *Horace* this celestial Name  
 Contemns, compar'd to Lyrick Fame;  
 A Spirit worthy of Romantick Flame!

For, truth to say, with all their Fufs,  
No Horfe could fly like *Pegasus*;  
And therefore seems it something hard  
To dub the Driver, not the Bard:  
For if fuch Facts were *Grecian* Glory,  
As fo their *Pindar* fings the Story,  
Which Merit moft fhould be rever'd,  
The Heels of Horfe, or Brains of Bard?  
Since equal seems the Work of either,  
While Bard and Horfe thus draw together.

That fuch things *were*, is all we learn,  
But why fo glorious don't difcern:  
Had Virtue, Wisdom, Learning, aught  
That could exalt the Mind, been wrought,  
Then might the Mufe, or breathing Stone,  
Their Deeds with deathlefs Glory crown:  
But, where the Soul can take no part,  
Mere moving Matter fhuns the Heart;

And

And Wreaths, to Bones and Nerves assign'd,  
Disgrace the Manhood of the Mind.  
Sure, from such Lays there's little Gleaning,  
Where Sounds and Words take place of Meaning!  
Shall we then read such Songs with Smiles,  
Or grieve such Wreaths ne'er reach'd our Isles?

O *Portmore! Panton!* had your Fate  
Not train'd your high-bred Steeds so late,  
How on *Olympian* Columns carv'd,  
Had been your hard-run Heats preserv'd!  
Or when those Monuments might shiver,  
Had liv'd in Lyrick Lays for ever!  
Who then shall say, that ancient Wit,  
Or Horse, out-ran us or out-writ?  
What, tho' the turgid Foam of Verse,  
Too long has cheaply charm'd our Ears,  
Still shall we bear the childish Cheat?  
For never --- can what's False be *Great!*

But ---

But---so 't has been; from eldest Time  
Th' Impossible was call'd *Sublime*!  
And equally an idle Story  
Has been of ancient Gods the Glory.  
To what strange Powers did Altars shine?  
Mark but their Attributes divine.  
When *Jove*, t'outdo the Joys of Man,  
Assumes the Bull, the Eagle, Swan,  
In all these Forms, however odd,  
They sing, and magnify their God!  
Nor deem they Lewdness can be bestial,  
When sanctified by Taste celestial.

Softly, Sir Critic---Tales like these  
Were Types of Morals, Mysteries!  
Mysteries indeed! where Gods, in Lust,  
Taught mortal Passions to be just!  
As if what made their Bliss sublime,  
Was one eternal Rutting-time.

Coarse

Coarse Food for Faith! no popish Bishop  
E'er serv'd his Fools so rank a Dish up.  
Or say blind Zeal might think it wholsom,  
To Sense and Virtue still 'twas fulsom:  
But Heathen Priests knew vulgar Conscience  
Would best obey in Chains of Nonsense.  
Thus, while the Bard and Priest combin'd,  
They turn'd the Brains of half Mankind:  
Whate'er they taught us was inspir'd,  
The less conceiv'd, the more admir'd:  
And wisely, while they form'd our Youth,  
Their gilded Trash went down for Truth.  
Now what is Truth, while we forsake it,  
Or think it Wisdom not to speak it?  
How! Ancients err? at *Rome*, as well,  
Popes, might we swear, were fallible.  
Well may such Tyrant Fame have Sway,  
While passive Children choose t' obey.  
Yet had such Fear, in Faith, o'er-rul'd us,  
Still had the Frauds of *Rome* befool'd us.

Still

Still had their *Beckets* spurn'd Allegiance,  
 And \* Monarchs scourg'd been taught Obedience.  
 You then, who see in Truth such Danger,  
 Move off! while Sense receives the Stranger.



## C A N T O II.

**T**O all this Talk, the Learn'd may urge,  
 This doughty Dunce deserves the Scourge;  
 Whose Brain not reaching Verse immortal,  
 Would thus their Claims to Fame cut short-all.  
 No, Sir, --- not All --- he grants you some  
 Might strike a keener Envy dumb:  
 But such have we; so take your Heat off,  
 For this rescinds not what I treat of;  
 These laughing Rhimes intend no more,  
 That not, with Pedants, to adore;

\* King *Henry* the Second was forced to run the Church-Gantlet, for too rashly resenting the Infolence of *Thomas Becket*, Bishop of *Canterbury*.

Nor



Nor think the Bard one jot inspir'd,  
That scales the Skies to be admir'd.

That Ancients have been fallible,  
Their old exploded Gods may tell:  
As those long since have been detected,  
Why mayn't their Verse too be suspected?  
Else, by a Parity of Cause,  
Might Truth be bound by Error's Laws.

Since then, as little Danger lies  
In doubting Verse, as Deities,  
Why must found Sense give up Opinion,  
In fear of critical Dominion?  
Shall Reverence to Antiquity  
Teach modern Consciences to lye?  
Truth, be thyself---nor bow to Fallacy.

Tho' *Horace*, in as lofty Lays  
As *Pindar* sings, sings *Pindar's* Praise;

C

Tho'

Tho' he foretells of those the \* Fate  
 Who would his Numbers emulate,  
 And sets his Power so strong before ye,  
 You'd think 'twere he, *profundo ore* !  
 Yet, when calm Judgment weighs the matter,  
 This whipt-cream Praise will sour to Satire:  
 For what's his *Flood* that down Hill rolls,  
 But the mere Marvellous of Schools?  
 Where Sophists, when the Classics thunder,  
 Lift their wise Eyes, and smack the Wonder!  
 As if the Excellence of Metre  
 Were Tones full-mouth'd, and mountain Matter :  
 And these, by being large and loud,  
 Made way, like Bullies in a Crowd :  
 In short, with all its Noise and splutter,  
 His Torrent dwindles to a Gutter.  
 As after stormy Summer Showers,  
 Down *Holborn-Hill* the Current roars,  
 And in the common Sink subsiding snores;

\* Pindarum *quisquis studet æmulari* &c.

Hor.

Thus,

Thus, as he somewhere sings in Scorn,  
 The *Mountain* groans, a *Mouse* is born:  
 But Genius, form'd by Nature great,  
 Of tumid Praise disdains the Cheat;  
 Self-prais'd she stands, in Worth confest,  
 While gilded Pills retain their Taste.  
 Thus *Horace* gives to *Pindar's* Lays  
 But mere Apothecary's Praise.

Yet hold --- to do his Judgment Right  
 Let's take him in a fairer Light;  
 Suppose he meant this Compliment a Bite!  
 That when his *tumbling Torrent* rais'd him,  
 It rather ridicul'd than prais'd him:  
 For if he plainly *Pindar* back'd,  
 He screw'd his Strings so high, they crack'd;  
 But true or false be this --- at least,  
 We know fly *Horace* lov'd his Jest:  
 Nay, should we grant him serious --- still  
 Wits have made Jests against their Will.

So choose your Side; be on, or off,  
The Weak, the Wise, will praise or laugh,  
Just as they judge it Grain or Chaff.

Suppose too *Pindar's* Muse had known  
To let the Elements alone;  
And, not t' have shewn a Horse's Merit,  
Swam him in Streams of spumy Spirit;  
Might not strong Nature's Force elastick  
Have, there, surpass'd th' Enthusiastick?  
That foams to join what can't agree,  
For Truth abhors *Hyperbole*,  
That empty, idle, windy Figure,  
That puffs! to make a Lye look bigger.  
Whate'er would Nature's Sight outfly,  
Is lost in loose Absurdity:  
Like glaring Vapours, all beyond her,  
But teaches Ignorance to wonder.

Nor

Nor weighs it much to say, such Lays  
 Have Ages liv'd in general Praise:  
 For oft' has modest Truth, in Terror,  
 Left general Praise in general Error:  
 Yet still, for Years, some thousands past,  
 Has reign'd so very learn'd a Taste,  
 That nothing charms it like the *Vast*!  
 Great Similes, tho' most unlike,  
 Are Prodigies, and sure to strike!  
 To cite but one, of Mountains more,  
 Behold --- ΑΡΙΣΤΟΝ μὲν ὕδωρ: \*  
 Which, not to give the Ladies pain,  
 Their easier *English* shall explain.

*Viz.*

“ As Water and the golden Mine,  
 “ All Nature's goodly Gifts outshine:  
 “ So, from whatever Sports excell,  
 “ *Olympick* Games must bear the Bell.

\* The first Line of *Pindar's* first Ode.

Here,

Here, tho' unmatch'd in Sound or Flame,  
The Sense and Simile's the same:  
Yet neither Sense nor Simile,  
Seem, with the Thing compar'd, to' agree.  
For how are Games *Olympick* fine,  
*As* Water's good, and Gold may shine?  
Suppose, to weigh the Truth, we grant,  
These three great Objects excellent,  
Yet, bring their Excellence together,  
Where's the least Semblance found in either?  
Have Gold, or Water, in their nature,  
Of *Grecian* Games one single Feature?  
Now if two *Bests*, unlike in Kind,  
May be in Simile conjoin'd,  
Then *Pindar's* Odes, by deeply studying,  
Might be compar'd to *best* Plumb-pudding.  
Nor call this Stile the mere Muse-monger,  
For what Delight, in Verse, is stronger,  
Than Lumps of Pudding give to Hunger?

(Critick,

(Critick, if this to you seem low,  
 Hark, in your Ear --- I meant it so.)  
 Lug out your *Pindar*, Sir! We'll show him,  
 This Simile is not below him:  
 For, when a Running-horse is meant  
 To match great Nature's Element,  
 Stands not the Beast as wide in Type  
 As Pudding is from *Pindar's* Pipe?  
 Nay, grant his Horse, than Pudding greater,  
 He's still a drop to Tides of Water!  
 'Twere strange it should our Fancy strike,  
 That all things fine are fine alike!  
 Say then, sound Judgment, which the worse is,  
 The Pudding's *Pindar*, or the Horses?  
 Pudding's my Word --- when they defeat it,  
 The Learned, then, shall make me eat it.

Yet *Pindar's* Lays are so divine,  
 Where *Gold* and *Water's* still so fine,  
 That twice repeated, and again, they shine!

}  
 For

For here \* the Games, there † *Theron's* Praises,  
 With this same Simile he blazes.  
 Tell us, ye Learned, would this Wonder  
 Not be, in modern Muse, a Blunder?  
 For Similes, like fragrant Posies,  
 Should fresh and fresh regale our Noses.  
 Nor serve they twice to fill the Board,  
 Like Brawn, or Pye of *Perigord*:  
 But where the Thing, at best, was bad,  
 Then to repeat it, --- O sad! sad!

Hold, hold! Miss Muse, you've rail'd enough;  
 Wise you may be; but why so rough?  
 This Simile you rate so low,  
 Was Great some thousand Years ago:  
 Shew me a modern Flight can mate it,  
 Fifty --- I'll cite you one shall beat it.  
 Where Numbers with Persuasion flow,  
 Where Objects rais'd by Likeness glow!

\* See the Beginning of *Pindar's* First Ode to *Hiero*.

† And the End of his Third to *Theron*.



Where, with her *Thames*, the Muse compar'd,  
Avows the *Genius* of the Bard.

*Viz.*

“ Tho’ deep, yet clear; tho’ gentle, yet not dull;  
“ Strong, without Rage; without o’erflowing, full.  
Here, at one View, the Stream, the Rhime,  
Throw out Analogy sublime;  
While Water, in the ancient Song,  
With shining Gold, so bright, so wrong,  
Fierce as the shallow Mill-brook foams along.  
If still we to your Candour seem,  
Inclining to the loose Extreme,  
Let’s fairly try how modern Races  
Would mend, by such strong Lights, their Praises.  
I hope, at least, no Rules can hinder  
Me more from lofty Flights, than *Pindar*?  
Come on, then; put the Case in kind,  
Stretch wide the Wing, and beat the Wind.

D

“ The

Viz.

“ The golden Sun’s a glorious Thing:

“ By Night the silver Moon we praise:

“ Just so, below, (God save the King!)

“ *Newmarket* Plates demand our Lays.

Now, gentle Sir, your Judgment, whether  
This pompous Puff outweighs a Feather?

If not --- why then, *a fortiori*,

It stronger makes my former Story:

For if these Lights one Horse-race smother,

Can *Gold* or *Water* save the other?

Thus great with small things ill compar’d,  
Disgrace th’ Ambition of the Bard:

As Jewels, in a Dowdy’s Ear,

Shew but her Blowziness too near.

And yet, alas! in Ladies Eyes,

Bawbles far-fetch’d give dear Surprise:

Thus

Thus too, in softer Words, to say -- Things,  
Such tinsel Toys are Poets Play-things.

But here, perhaps, with waxen Wing,  
The Muse too near the Sun may sing:  
Yet, tho' too fond she of Applause is,  
*Magnis tamen excidit ausis!*  
Rash tho' her Flight might be, yet still  
Sh' has this to boast -- she bravely fell!  
Howe'er, my Lord, tho' you have Goodness,  
It binds you not to bear this Oddness.  
I know your Candour, and admire it,  
The less I therefore ought to tire it:  
And, conscious, should cut short my Theme,  
With this, *ex pede Herculem.*  
But O! my partial *dulce decus!*  
Should your Indulgence not forsake us,  
Ah! should it grant, with smiling Eye,  
Some Truth supports this *Rhapsody*;

Gods!

Gods! how the Boon my Muse might fire!  
 With bold *Horatian* Heights t'aspire!  
 Hence, to the Stars, her Pride would fly,  
 With Mien majestick sweep the Sky,  
 And bid the Bards above --- stand by!

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

Page 8. Line 9. *for follow read fellow*  
 Page 10. Line 15. *for bear read beat*  
 Page 16. Line 14. *for That read Than.*













